

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

May 17, 2022

**Repurposing and Reimagining Challenger Memorial Youth Center**

The Antelope Valley is one of the most disadvantaged and underserved regions in Los Angeles County and has the highest concentration of households with children in the County, as well as the County's highest rates of reported child abuse and neglect and the highest concentration of youth impacted by the juvenile justice system. A 2019 study found that the region's employment rate is significantly lower than the rest of County and life expectancy, along with other health outcomes, are also lower than in other parts of the County. Poverty, food insecurity and rates of homelessness are also disproportionately higher than in other parts of the County.

The Challenger Memorial Youth Center (Challenger), a former juvenile detention facility located in the City of Lancaster, comprises about 220,000 square feet of building area on approximately 60 acres of County-owned land. The Challenger site is part of a larger County-owned landholding of approximately 360 acres, which includes the former Mira Loma Detention Center, the former High Desert Multi-Service Ambulatory Care Center (MACC), the Lancaster Animal Care Center, a solar farm, and areas of unimproved land. Many of these facilities are currently vacant and present opportunities

**MOTION**

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for repurposing and reuse.

On October 30, 2018, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to conceptually support the repurposing of Challenger into a residential vocational training facility for young adults, and directed the Probation Department and the Chief Executive Officer to develop a comprehensive plan for the proposed repurposing of Challenger. That plan was to also include implementation of a residential vocational training program at the facility, a summary of necessary capital improvements, programming, an implementation timeline, a proposed budget, and potential funding sources. A consultant was engaged to help frame the envisioned program.

Reimagining and repurposing Challenger is an effort to remediate long-standing inequities in the Antelope Valley. It is also part of the County's broader commitment to focus on providing necessary and effective care for vulnerable youth to prevent them from becoming homeless or becoming involved in the criminal justice system. The program would serve participants between the ages of 18-25 who were formerly involved with the criminal justice or foster care systems or who are homeless. They would live on the Challenger campus for 6-18 months while they are provided with educational pathways, life-skills instruction, career training and offered behavioral health and other critical services. Graduates of the program may potentially be offered housing in the vicinity of the Challenger campus for an interim period following their completion of the program, to ensure that each participant is adequately supported on the path to independent adulthood (i.e., full-time employment and permanent housing).

On April 6, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Motion which: 1.)

Authorized the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to serve as the agent of the County for the reimagining and redevelopment of Challenger (proposed Project); 2) Directed the CEO Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to advocate during FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22 for an additional \$25 million; and 3) Delegated and authorized the CEO to coordinate with the Center for Strategic Partnerships and several County departments and other agencies.

On June 9, 2021, the CEO issued its report back to the Board, as required by the April 6, 2021 motion, which included recommendations and next steps to identify and enter into exclusive negotiations with a non-profit organization for the design and operation of the proposed program, including a proposed implementation schedule, evaluation of funding needs, and a review of available funding streams for the proposed capital development.

Currently, the County team is working to advance various aspects of the proposed Challenger Repurposing project, should it be approved by the Board in the future, including negotiating an agreement with Antelope Valley College (AVC) for designing the proposed residential and vocational training programs (under delegated contract authority), and advocating to secure \$25 million in additional funding for the proposed Challenger project during the FY 2022-24 Legislative Session. Continued planning activities will involve developing estimates for facility reuse, including estimated repurposing and renovation construction costs, as well as annual operating costs, as identified by the design of the proposed program. Several actions need to be taken now in order to begin accumulating funding sufficient to cover the total costs for

the proposed project, which is likely to range in the tens of millions of dollars.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE,** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the actions herein are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because they are activities that are excluded from the definition of a project by section 21065 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15378 (b)(4) and (5) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The actions involve the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities that do not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in potentially significant physical impact on the environment and are administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. The recommended actions do not include approval of any project, as defined under CEQA. Staff will return to the Board in the future, with appropriate recommendations under CEQA prior to implementation of any activities that would be considered a project;
2. Establish the proposed Repurposing of Challenger Memorial Youth Center, Capital Project No. 87597, with an initial project budget of \$6,032,000;
3. Approve the attached appropriation adjustment to: increase \$468,000 in appropriation for the Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS - emerging *Department of Economic Opportunity*) operating budget, offset with State revenue held in a County Trust Account to cover the following costs: Program design services not-to-exceed \$225,000 for a contract with

Antelope Valley College, project management services not-to-exceed \$200,000 for a contract with Deborah Kanter, and administrative costs not-to-exceed \$43,000 for WDACS; and increase \$6,032,000 in appropriation for the Repurposing of Challenger Memorial Youth Center, Capital Project No 87597, offset with \$4,532,000 State revenue held in a County Trust Account, and transfer \$1,500,000 from the Affordable Housing budget unit (The \$1,500,000 was previously earmarked, per the April 23, 2019 Board Motion, for a Mobile Home Housing Program in the Fifth District);

4. Authorize WDACS to execute and, if necessary, to amend or terminate, a Contract with Antelope Valley College for program design;
5. Provide WDACS delegated contract authority to execute and, if necessary, to amend or terminate, a Contract with Deborah Kanter for project management services;
6. Direct the CEO Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to continue advocating to secure \$25 million in additional State funding for the proposed Challenger project during the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Legislative Session, as needed; and,
7. Direct WDACS, in consultation with the Chief Executive Office, to collaborate on design of the proposed program with Antelope Valley College (AVC) and include the Departments of Children and Family Services, Health Services, Office of Diversion and Reentry, Mental Health, Public Social Services, Youth Commission, Center for Strategic Partnerships, and Probation as well as the Los

Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority, and any other pertinent County Departments or agencies as needed.

The relevant Department Heads shall ensure the active collaboration and support of the Challenger project by their respective representatives based on the assessment of needs of the project as determined by WDACS and CEO.

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May 17, 2022

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER:  
THE FOLLOWING APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENT IS DEEMED NECESSARY BY THIS DEPARTMENT. PLEASE CONFIRM THE ACCOUNTING ENTRIES AND AVAILABLE BALANCES AND FORWARD TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR HER RECOMMENDATION OR ACTION.

ADJUSTMENT REQUESTED AND REASONS THEREFORE  
FY 2021-22  
4 - VOTES

SOURCES	USES
PROBATION REPURPOSING OF CHALLENGER MEMORIAL YOUTH CENTER A01-CP-88-8752-65042-87597 STATE-OTHER / CAPITAL PROJECTS INCREASE REVENUE4,532,000	PROBATION REPURPOSING OF CHALLENGER MEMORIAL YOUTH CENTER A01-CP-6014-65042-87597 CAPITAL ASSETS - B & I INCREASE APPROPRIATION6,032,000
AFFORDABLE HOUSING A01-AM-5500-10160 OTHER CHARGES DECREASE APPROPRIATION1,500,000	
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AGING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - ADMIN A01-CS-88-8786-26560 STATE AID-CORRECTIONS INCREASE REVENUE468,000	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AGING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - ADMIN A01-CS-2000-26560 SERVICES & SUPPLIES INCREASE APPROPRIATION468,000
SOURCES TOTAL\$6,500,000	USES TOTAL\$6,500,000

JUSTIFICATION

Reflects the increase of \$6.032M in approp. for Repurposing of Challenger Memorial Youth Center, C. P. No. 87597, offset with \$4.532M State rev. held in Trust Account (TA)and transfer \$1.5M from Affordable Housing budget unit. Also, increase \$468K in approp. for WDACS (emerging Dept. of Economic Opportunity) operating budget, offset with State Rev. held in TA to fund the following costs: program design serv. (\$225K), project management serv. (\$200K). and adm. costs-WDACS (\$43K).

James Yun

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Date: 2022.05.10 10:30:54  
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AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

JAMES YUN, MANAGER, CEO

BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL (AS REQUESTED/REVISED)

REFERRED TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR---	<input type="checkbox"/> ACTION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED AS REQUESTED	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RECOMMENDATION	<input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED AS REVISED	
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER	BY Lan Sam	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	BY Amir Alam
B.A. NO. 211	DATE May 10, 2022		DATE 5/10/2022